



Sighting of Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* at wetlands of central Aravalli foothills, Ajmer, Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

The present note deals with the sighting of Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* from wetlands of central Aravalli foothills, Ajmer, Rajasthan. It was the first confirmed photographic record from central Aravalli foothills.

Key Words: *Rostratula benghalensis*, Aravalli foothills, Ajmer, Rajasthan.

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* is wide spread resident at fresh water and reedy marshes, vegetated pools and mangroves of southern and central India. This species prefers mainly fresh water marshes with deep pools, ditches with thick vegetation, mud patches and mangroves. The distribution maps in Ali and Ripley (1986); Grimmett et al. (1999); Kumar et al. (2005); Kazmierczak & Perlo (2006) have not any indication of sighting this species from the wetlands of central Aravalli foothills. There are no published records of this species from central Rajasthan (sharma et al. 2011; 2012 a & b). Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* has a fragmented or patchy distribution pattern in south Asia.

Species description and habit

Females larger than male, sexes more or less alike. Male and females are difficult to identify in non breeding plumage. Head and neck chestnut in color along with broad, median and buff stripe on head down to bill. Body coloration metallic bronze-green spotted and streaked with bands in general. Active during early morning, evening and night may be found solitary or in small flocks and breeds almost throughout the year. The mode of nutrition is omnivorous and prefers aquatic insects and crustaceans (Fig 1 & 2).

Study area

The area under investigation situated at foothills of central Aravalli foothills, Ajmer, Rajasthan lies in between 26°16'n 74°25'e / 26°27'n, 74°42'e and elevation 486 m (1,594 ft) with an area of 8,481 km². Eastern portion of the Ajmer district is generally flat, with broken gentle undulations of Aravalli ranges. Whereas, the western parts, from north-west to south-west, are intersected by the continuous Aravalli ranges. Site of interest is known as the Fool Sagar Talab (26° 16' n 74° 25' e and 26° 27' n 74° 42' e) and partly constituted of admixture of undulating sandy and rocky terrain along with flats and isolated low laying hills and agricultural fields (Fig 3).

During the regular field surveys for avian fauna under the novel concept of “**Live Zoology**” coined by senior author (Prof. K. K. Sharma) at the wetlands of central Aravalli foothills of Ajmer during November 2012 to March 2013, we encountered with greater painted snipe, which had not been reported earlier.

The sighting is slightly difficult due to effective camouflage and motionlessness behaviour the bird for longer periods; it took long time to record photographs to confirm its presence at study area. For this reasons the wetland were explored twice a month to confirm its occurrence at various sites. Interestingly this species shared its microhabitat with Jack snipe (*Limnocryptes minimus*) at the study area.

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Fig. 1: Pair of Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghlensis* hiding at soil undulations at wetlands of central Aravalli foothills, Ajmer, Rajasthan (photo by: Vivek Sharma)



Fig. 2: Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghlensis* at wetlands of central Aravalli foothills, Ajmer, Rajasthan (photo by: Vivek Sharma)



Fig. 3: map of Rajasthan highlighted with central Aravalli areas of Ajmer, Rajasthan

The identification was confirmed by using Grimmett et al. (1999); Kumar et al. 2005; Kazmierczak & perlo (2006) and Manakandan et al. (2011).

Seven individuals were firstly seen on 12 February, 2013 after that it was regular sighted till 18 March, 2013. Five more individuals were also

photographed with Jack snipe they often played hide and seek under the undulations of soil near the wetland during the observations.

From these observations we confirmed the sightings of Greater Painted snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* from the wetlands of central aravalli foothills, Ajmer, Rajasthan at it seems to be a first photographic record.

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